

**Remarks**

Currently pending are claims 14-15, 17-18, 21-23 and 26-28. Claims 14 and 26 have been amended to further distinguish Applicant's invention. Support for the amendments can be found at, for example, paragraphs [0042] and [0066] of the present application. No new matter has been added.

**35 U.S.C. § 112**

The Examiner rejected claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Applicant has cancelled claim 25 rendering this rejection moot.

**35 U.S.C. § 103**

The Examiner rejected claims 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pinnavaia (US 5,760,106) in view of Zilg et al. (US 6,197,849). Applicant traverses this rejection for the following reasons.

Pinnavaia teaches resin/organo-clay compositions containing an epoxy resin, curing agent and an organo-clay which has been ion exchanged with alkylammonium ions. Pinnavaia does not teach or suggest the addition of aluminum trihydrate that interacts with a nanoscale platelet filler as currently claimed. Nor does Pinnavaia teach or suggest a nanoscale platelet filler comprising alkyl ammonium ions on the surface of a basic bentonite clay structure as currently claimed.

The Examiner has added Zilg et al. for the purpose of teaching the further addition of a filler to Pinnavaia's resin/organo-clay composition. While Zilg does teach the addition of conventional additives, such as fillers (in particular, chalk, wollastonite and powdered quartz), to resin/organo-clay compositions, Zilg does not teach or suggest

the addition of aluminum trihydrate that interacts with the platelet filler. Zilg et al. also does not teach or suggest the use of a nanoscale platelet filler comprising alkyl ammonium ions on the surface of a basic bentonite clay structure. Thus, the combination of Pinnavaia and Zilg et al. does not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations of Applicant's present claimed invention.

Moreover, Zilg et al.'s resin/organo-clay composition is completely different than Pinnavaia's. Zilg et al.'s composition contains organo-clays which have been ion exchanged with amidine compounds and not alkylammonium compounds. In fact, Zilg et al. teaches away from using Pinnavaia's organo-clays in its resin/organo-clay composition by expressly teaching that organo-clays ion exchanged with alkylammonium ions decompose during resin processing and form decomposition products which can lead to emissions and impairment of mechanical properties such as impact strength in the cured product. *See US 6,197,849* at col. 1, ll. 19-36. In addition, they can cause the cured product to become discolored. *See id.* Thus, one skilled in the art, when reading both publications as whole, would not reasonably expect the combination of Pinnavaia with Zilg et al. would produce a successful resin/organo-clay composition as the Examiner asserts. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the rejections be withdrawn.

The Examiner further rejected claim 23 as being unpatentable over Pinnavaia in view of Zilg et al. and further in view of Kobayashi (US 6,342,295).

For the all reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits claim 14 is not rendered obvious by the publications cited above. Accordingly, claim 23, which depends

on claim 14, is also not obvious. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the rejection of claim 23 be withdrawn.

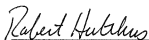
**Conclusion**

It is respectfully submitted that claims 14-15, 17-18, 21-23 and 26-28 are patentable and are in a condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests these claims be allowed and that the application pass to issuance.

The Commissioner of Patents is hereby authorized to deduct any fee due in connection with the filing of this document from Huntsman Corporation Deposit Account No. 08-3442.

Respectfully Submitted,

Huntsman Corporation  
10003 Woodloch Forest Drive  
The Woodlands, Texas 77380  
(281) 719-4553



Robert Holthus  
Reg. No. 50,347  
Attorney for Applicant  
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